

W. C. T. U. Column.

Through the courtesy of the REGISTER this space is granted to the W. C. T. U. It is edited by MARTHA J. FRANCIS, Local Press Superintendent, as appointed by the State Organizer, Mrs. L. LaMance.

W. C. T. U. WATCHWORDS: ORGANIZE! EDUCATE! AGITATE!

W. C. T. U. PRINCIPLES: Total Abstinence: Prohibition of the Liquor Traffic: One Standard of Morals for Men and Women: Home Protection: Equal Suffrage: and the Teaching of Scientific Temperance in Public Schools.

Poisoning the Springs of Life.

Since 1905 a royal commission has been at work investigating the subject of feeble-minded persons in the British empire. The commissioners have recently reported by sub-commission the amount of idiocy they have found in the asylums and retreats of the United States, and the report has been published as a Blue Book. The commissioners announced that in the United States the word "feeble-minded" is used to denote all kinds of mental defect except acquired insanity, and that, in 1904, 14,300 feeble-minded persons were detained in special institutions maintained by the states.

According to a statement made in the journal of the American Medical Association October 10, 1900, by Dr. Eugene Cohn, first assistant physician of the Illinois Southern Hospital, "the most authentic records of Europe and this country show that one-fourth of the feeble-minded have ancestors who are affected by alcoholism," or, in other words, are directly or indirectly chargeable to the liquor traffic.

Let us suppose that one-half of these feeble-minded persons (that is, of the 4,706 credited to alcoholic ancestry) are males, which would give us 2,353 in the institutions of the United States in 1904—the number is much larger now—and this number does not include anything like the total of feeble-minded throughout the country. It is perhaps a conservative statement to say that there are more than twice as many outside the asylums than inside. The 2,353 alcoholic male feeble-minded, if untouched by this curse, would have grown into workmen, according to the figures of all the industrial bureaus in the United States, the economic value of whose annual labor output would have been \$5,957,500.

This says nothing about the wages of these potential workmen spoiled by liquor. It says nothing about the economic value of the females forever barred from becoming the foundations of families, and the like is true regarding the feeble-minded males.

The cost of maintaining these poor creatures ruined by alcohol in the feeble-minded asylums of the United States, at the conservative figure of \$160 apiece, in 1904 was \$395,578. Adding this to the total loss of any economic output from them shows a deficit due to alcoholism of annually among the feeble-minded of \$6,353,078, and this as we have said, pertains to but one-half the alcoholic feeble-minded in the asylums, and never touches the far greater margin among females and the vast numbers outside. The conduct of the United States with respect to tolerating the liquor traffic is thus a poisoning of the very springs of life for a multitude of its future citizens. They come into the world imbeciles, they pass through it demented, because of this governmental policy—and the government is nothing but the people of the United States.

Any nation which thus poisons the springs of life at this first issuance in this world is economically a fool.

Morally, if it knows what it is doing, it is worse than a murderer. A murderer mercifully kills his victim at once and is done with it, but to knowingly and deliberately poison the lives of human beings at their very start, to make them idiots and bring shame and life-long sorrow to their families—a fate worse than death—is worse than murder.

One of the prime necessities of the present time in the United States is that it should find out the economic and moral monstrosity of its connivance at the liquor traffic. It is almost infinitely worse than the blackest records of the old slavery days.

Wayside Confidences.

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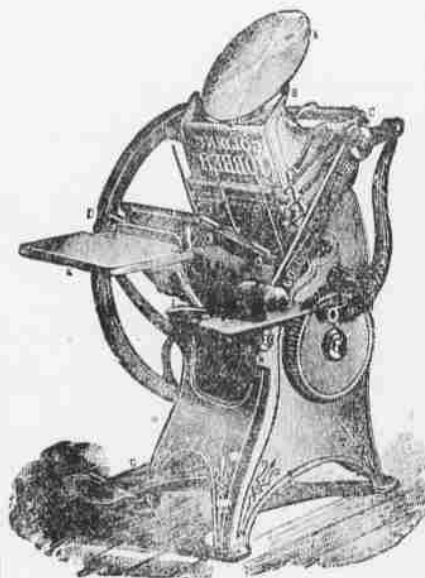
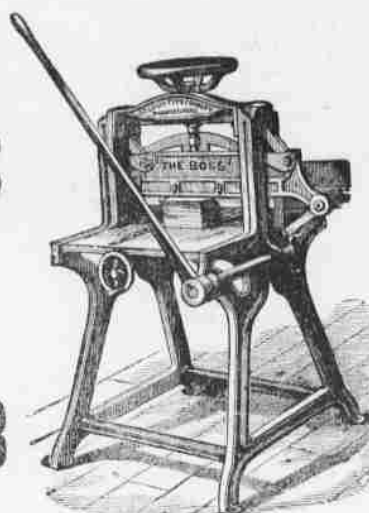
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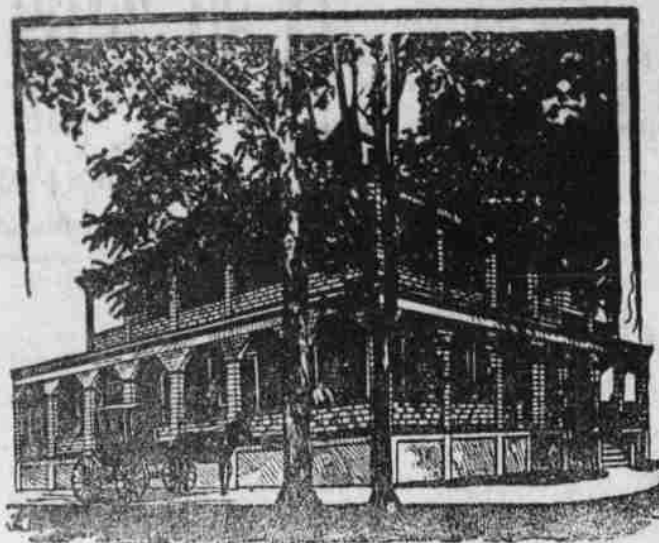
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